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Book Reviews-Monographic Musings

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winning *Encyclopedia of Women and Religion in North America* as a more focused complement (2006, 978-0253346858, \$250).

Scholars and serious students will welcome **ABC-CLIO's *A History of the U.S. Political System: Ideas, Interests and Institutions*** (2010, 978-1851097135, \$295). It is a three-volume set that forgoes the use of the usual alphabetical arrangement for a topical grouping within the first two volumes and a collection of relevant documents in the third. The first volume centers on the founding concepts like Federalism and the relationship of Church and State as well as institutions like the presidency, the Congress, and contemporary bureaucracy. The second volume examines the development of specifics like political parties, elections, interest groups, social movements, the media, domestic and foreign policy, and the policy process itself. Volume three consists of important documents and primary sources organized by era from the early republic through the second Bush Administration.

Attention to scholarship is evident throughout. The entries are well researched, thoughtful, and thorough essays rather than the more specific and briefer articles found in many reference works. There is also a focus on primary source material which enhances the academic value of the set. In addition to the documents that make up the third volume, relevant documents are also provided at the end of each section in the first two volumes. Edited by respected scholars **Richard A. Harris** and **Daniel J. Tichenor**, more than 50 historians and political scientists contributed their insights and observations. Each essay is accompanied by helpful references and notes, and each volume has its own index. Oddly there is no cumulative index which impedes the use of this set as reference to mine individual facts.

Given its arrangement and lack of an overall index, *A History of the U.S. Political System* is perhaps more appropriate for circulating collections rather than reference. It is not the type of work that encourages the specific finding of facts or the gathering of brief background information. In order to gain full value from this work requires time and effort, both examining the layout of the set as well as in reading the individual essays. Of course this in no way diminishes its value to scholars. However, these volumes may be of most use in circulating collections where readers are given the opportunity to examine them at home. Libraries wanting this set as a reference may want to consider purchasing the electronic version where keyword searching would more readily allow finding specifics and the printing of brief passages. In any case, the overall quality of scholarship found in this set makes it a valuable purchase for most academic libraries. (For pricing information about the electronic version call 800-368-6868 or email <CustomerService@abc-clio.com>.

Broadway: an Encyclopedia of Theater and American Culture (2010, 978-0313342646, \$180) is a two-volume set that seeks to portray the cultural impact of this iconic center of American theater. Published by **Greenwood Press** and edited by **Thomas Greenfield**, this set combines entries on important theatrical personalities and institutions, landmark productions, and thematic essays. In all, there are over 60 scholars contributing nearly 200 articles in these two volumes.

As one might expect, articles on the people, institutions, and productions that made **Broadway** famous account for most of the entries in this *Encyclopedia*. Actors and actresses ranging from **Paul Robeson** to **Carol Channing**, directors from **Jose Quintero** to **Harold Prince**, and composers and lyricists from **George and Ira Gershwin** to **Rodgers and Hammerstein** fill the pages of these two volumes. There are also articles about influential choreographers and dancers, producers, playwrights, and theater owners. Famous landmark productions like the **Ziegfeld Follies**, **Long Day's Journey into Night**, **Our Town**, **Porgy and Bess**, **My Fair Lady**, **Oh! Calcutta!**, and **Cats** are included as are influential organizations and institutions like the **Federal Theater Project**, the **Provincetown Players**, and the **Theatre Guild**. These articles are full of facts and details as well as achievements and impacts. But the most unique and

thought-provoking articles are those dealing with broader themes. There are entries that discuss the thorny issues of ethnicity, gender, and identity as well as those that treat the relationship between **Broadway** and other art forms from Comic Books to Vaudeville. In addition, there are articles that point to the impact of **Broadway** on regional theater, tourism, and theater education and performance in American high schools.

Scholarly productions values are obvious. Each entry has its own list of further readings, and there is a general bibliography and list of online sources at the end of volume two. Other value-added features include a list of **Broadway** theaters and an accompanying map, a helpful introduction, a timeline, a topical guide, a brief glossary, a list of contributors and their affiliations, and a general index.

Broadway: an Encyclopedia of Theater and American Culture is a definite starting place for anyone interested in exploring the significance of **Broadway** in American theater history and its impact on our broader culture. While the *Encyclopedia* makes no claim to be comprehensive, it provides readers with essential information as well as food for thought in a highly accessible and readable style. This set will be useful to a wide audience including lay readers, high school students, and undergraduates. Depending on individual library need, it is worthy of consideration for either circulating or reference collections. 🐼

Book Reviews — Monographic Musings

Column Editor: **Debbie Vaughn** (College of Charleston) <vaughnd@cofc.edu>

Column Editor's Note: *I always thoroughly enjoy the Reference Publishing Issue of ATG, as it serves as a friendly reminder of the myriad of ways that different departments of a library influence one another and work together. Take, for instance, the topics covered in this issue's review books: core collections for public libraries, readers' advisory, and paying for library school. It is easy to understand how readers' advisory integrates with reference service; but the other subjects share a mutually-beneficial relationship with reference and reference publishing as well. Acquisitions and collection development are the foundation of a library; without them, reference would have nothing on which to base public service. Likewise, new librarians*

must continue to be minted, and research and scholarship must persist in order for libraries to continue to meet the needs of our information-rich society. Reference, acquisitions, library professionals, friends, publishers, vendors — it takes a village to raise a solid library.

*Many thanks to returning reviewer **Joey van Arnhem** for contributing her thoughts to this issue, and a hearty welcome to MM-newcomer **Patrick Valentine**. **Patrick** is a professor in the Department of Library Science at **East Carolina University**, where he has published and presented on a plethora of topics including multilingual information literacy and school library collections.*

Happy reading, everyone! — DV

Alabaster, Carol. *Developing an Outstanding Core Collection*. 2nd ed. Chicago: ALA, 2010. 978-0838910405. 200 pages. \$60.00.

Reviewed by **Patrick M. Valentine** (Department of Library Science, East Carolina University)

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Although the title does not reflect it, this book is strictly for public libraries. **Carol Alabaster**, using the **Phoenix Public Library** as her set piece, advocates a strongly built and carefully maintained core collection of fiction and non-fiction that should be part of every branch because “people are looking for guidance in spending their limited time and resources” (ix), and librarians are the experts who should provide this guidance. The core collection would include classics but be timely through weeding and the addition of new titles. Every item should be popular and should circulate a minimum of three times a year at each location. While this standard of success might seem unlikely to many public librarians, her point is that the core collection itself draws attention just as does a New Book section near the circulation desk. It is not meant to be a forbidden zone in the Reference area.

Alabaster says she recognizes the changes technology is making. She includes web addresses of many lists of essential titles which, if nothing else, should encourage discussion and thought, plus her own sample core list. I looked first at her mystery list. It included my favorite writer but with a title she never wrote – **P. D. James**, *Mr. White's Confession*, actually written by **Robert Clark**. Picking one or two **P. D. James** over the rest is hard enough without chasing ghost titles.

A committee should decide on what to include and what to exclude. The basic mantra is, “When in doubt, just leave it out” (18). **Alabaster** includes a sample policy statement and describes the process that needs to be followed. Core collections of carefully selected titles do ensure a certain quality, but the question remains: whose notion of quality and how does this “quality” change over time and from community to community?

Alabaster does not advocate one size fits all but urges each library to develop its own list. This could be a way of engaging their local clubs and groups in the collection process. Community involvement, although time consuming, has many potential advantages. Wikis and blogs could be used, all with a baseline of **Alabaster's** selection instructions and suggestions (55, 75-76, 138-39). Each club could pick or be assigned a separate genre or subject; a librarian has a book talk with them about the purpose and criteria, then comes back later to learn the results. Perhaps they could have naming rights, the **Valentine Book Club of All-Time Romances**. The library would receive valuable publicity and contacts with the community, the club members would be flattered and learn more about the library, and good books would get attention.

Librarians following this line of endeavor would do well to first read this book. Some of **Alabaster's** dictums, however, are suspect, such as that “fiction reviews are totally subjective and based

on a reviewer's personal likes and dislikes” (105). The philosophy of *Developing an Outstanding Core Collection* may be admirable except that many public libraries are moving in the opposite direction. Instead of applying thoughtful consideration and timely analysis to

their collections, they are relying on bestseller lists and vendor services. **Alabaster's** core principles offer an antidote. Many collection people will appreciate this updating of what itself belongs in the core collection of library science reference books.

The Readers' Advisory Handbook. Eds. **Jessica E. Moyer** and **Kaite Mediatore Stover**. Chicago: ALA, 2010. 978-0838910429. 220 pages. \$55.00.

Reviewed by **Patrick M. Valentine** (Department of Library Science, East Carolina University)

The Readers' Advisory Handbook is mostly a series of workshop presentations, and as a result the contents are short advice pieces, several of them by the editor **Jessica Moyer**. Contributors understand readers' advisory as going beyond the quick, “Oh, if you like **Elizabeth Peters** you'll love **Barbara Michaels**”-type advice to marketing, reviewing, and programming. **Paul Smith**, for instance, tells how to host author events, and **Lissa Staley** writes on kits for book groups from assembling to circulation. The presentations go beyond, in other words, traditional readers' advisory to public services. Relatively new areas like graphic novels, audiobooks, and manga are covered as well as more traditional reference — updated to include electronic sources. **Bobbi**

Newman takes readers' advisory into online realms without techno-babble. The emphasis throughout the book is on practical advice for practicing librarians. More extensive discussions can be found elsewhere, but nowhere, I believe, in such short compass in one source. Each presentation includes references and Websites.

Some of the material is duplicated in other chapters as each stands alone. Individually, they can easily be devoured in one sitting and should get staff and student juices running. The print cost is excessive for classroom use, but e-copies could substitute. *The Readers' Advisory Handbook* is very suitable for small public and school libraries as well as larger — and could be stimulating, too, for academic librarians!

Schlachter, Gail Ann and **R. David Weber**. *How to Pay for Your Degree in Library & Information Studies 2010-2012*. El Dorado Hills, CA: Reference Service Press, 2009. 978-1588412157. 266 pages. \$30.00.

Reviewed by **Jolanda-Pieta (Joey) van Arnhem, MFA** (Instructor and Training Coordinator, College of Charleston Libraries) <vanarnhemj@cofc.edu>

In our uncertain economic times, librarians and students of library and information science must plan carefully to deal with the financial strain of study, research, and professional development. Fortunately, *How to Pay for Your Degree in Library & Information Studies* by **Gail Ann Schlachter** and **R. David Weber** contains information on more than 800 scholarships, awards, and other opportunities for funding applicable to undergraduate, graduate, and certificate programs. **Schlachter**, former president of the **ALA Reference and User Services Association**, brings over 30 years of library science service to bear in compiling this informative reference.

Weber is a former professor of history and economics at **Los Angeles Harbor College** and **East Los Angeles College** who has written many financial aid reference volumes. The book's introduction contains practical instructions and expository information, including a very useful annotated sample entry. The authors are careful to address library and information students in a frank

and truthful manner, warning that though job prospects may be more bountiful, budget cuts, rising tuition costs, and lower salaries are also evident in the field.

Schlachter and **Weber's** helpful compendium is well indexed and thoughtfully arranged, allowing readers to find opportunities relevant to their needs quickly and efficiently. Listings can be found by activity, including not only study but research, conference attendance, and creative activities. The book contains no less than seven indexes: *Program Title*, *Sponsoring Organization*, *Residency*, *Tenability* (that is, opportunities with a geographic focus or restriction), *Specialty*, *Diversity*, and *Calendar*. Resources are also listed by the type of service and organization, including special libraries, archives, and museums. Descriptions accompanying each resource are detailed and informative.

The directory is an ongoing work that will be updated in 2012 to cover sources for 2012-2014. Authors invite submissions to their database of funding opportunities for their investigation. This work is no doubt invaluable to library and information science

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Column Editor: **Donna Jacobs** (Research Specialist, Transgenic Mouse Core Facility, MUSC, Charleston, SC 29425)
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Like sweet fruit, fresh vegetables, and fragrant flowers, Farmer's Markets are sprouting up everywhere in the greater Charleston area. We find markets in Marion Square on Saturday, in the horseshoe courtyard at the **Medical University of South Carolina** on Friday, and at the Mount Pleasant Farmer's Market Pavilion next to **Moultrie Middle School** on Tuesday. This revival is like coming home to the Lowcountry of South Carolina since its history is strongly rooted in an agrarian society. Trends to buy local, join a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture), eat slo-food, plant a garden, and think sustainability are growing in popularity as the Farmer's Market once again becomes rooted in the culture of our society. More and more people are thinking about the Earth in a manner that harkens back to a simpler time. The 21st century may be awash in sophisticated technology that changes faster than we can make a purchase, but the desire to plant a garden, compost, recycle, and live a sustainable life is demanding a different outcome from our technology. The conflict is not a modern one. **Pearl S. Buck** in her 1931 novel *The Good Earth* gives the reader the smell of the earth, the sweat of the toil, the value of the land, and the conflict of hard work vs. wealth and easy living all from the point of view of a poor peasant farmer named **Wang Lung**.

I don't remember a time that I didn't know about *The Good Earth*, but it took finding a red hardcover, beautifully illustrated, 1992 *Reader's Digest* edition at **Blue Bicycle Books** on King Street in Charleston for me to begin to read this classic. The simplicity of the language reminds me of a foreigner trying to speak English and adds a dimension to the

story that is tangible. The story begins with the marriage day of **Wang Lung**, a farmer in a small village. We are guided through his rituals and journey to the House of Hwang where he meets **O-lan**, a slave in the house that has been promised to him in marriage. **Wang Lung** is a man whose love for the land is as strong as the ox that pulls his plow. He is anxious to have a wife and family to share the toils of his everyday life and hopefully his love for the land. Nothing else matters to him but the land, and this sets the stage for an intriguing peak into Chinese culture.

Wang Lung's obsession with land coupled with Nature's cycles of drought and full harvest allow **Buck** to give the reader the essentials of Chinese life in the rich and the poor times for a peasant farmer. **Wang Lung's** obsession extends to acquisition, and he uses the family money to purchase land from the House of Hwang which has fallen under the influence of opium and unbridled spending. A drought comes, and the family has no monetary reserve to survive and decides to travel south on a "fire wagon," known in the West as a railroad, to eke out a living. The family lives in a hut on the street in the southern city and can only manage to live hand-to-mouth until an enemy invasion occurs. All **Wang Lung** has thought about is returning to his land in the north. As the city is in turmoil the poor people seize the opportunity to loot. **Wang Lung** and **O-lan** join in and find enough riches to provide them the means to return to their home. The years of prosperity that follow give rise to another dilemma — one of wealth. **Wang Lung** can afford education for his sons, men to help with the labor, time to visit the village's tea



rooms. He ultimately is not able to instill his love for the land in his sons, much to his final dismay.

Pearl Buck was raised in China, the daughter of a missionary. She left China to study at **Randolph Macon Women's College** from 1910 to 1914. Upon returning to China she married **John Lossing Buck**. **Buck** was an agricultural specialist hired by the Presbyterian Mission Board to teach the local Chinese farmers American farming methods. **Buck** was able to immerse herself in the culture of the Chinese farmers of northern China where they lived and observe their lives and customs. She described herself as "mentally bifocal." "When I was in the Chinese world, I was Chinese, I spoke Chinese, and behaved as a Chinese, and ate as a Chinese did, and I shared their thoughts and feelings. When I was in the American world, I shut the door between." This bifocal mentality provides the reader with a unique Chinese experience — one that is given to us by an American who feels as if she is Chinese. We learn of foot binding, the significance of the color red in celebration, the insignificant position of women in Chinese society, the desire for a son to carry on the family name and traditions, and the toils and tribulations of the poor peasant farmer.

The success of *The Good Earth* planted **Pearl Buck** among the internationally-renowned authors, as she became the first American woman to win the **Nobel Prize** in literature in 1938. The book was translated into several languages including Chinese and has been cited as one of the principal reasons for changing the West's view of China. A recent book review in the *Wall Street Journal* written by **Melanie Kirkpatrick** about the biography *Pearl Buck in China: Journey to the Good Earth* by **Hilary Spurling** gives us an opportunity to revisit an old friend. 🐼

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professionals, from students and new librarians just starting out to veterans searching for funds for professional development. This handy reference is recommended for any library. Considering its usefulness for professional development for librarians, it is particularly highly recommended for academic libraries and institutions that place a priority on investing in their library staff. 🐼

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living in a small apartment not too far from **St. Ed's**. He is planning to retire in June 2011 and he says he will keep writing for *ATG*. Whew! Meanwhile, **Tom** is sending a brand new librarian to the **30th Charleston Conference** — **Kady Ferris**. **Kady** got her MLS from **UT Austin** in May and began in August as **St. Edwards'** very first collection development librarian. We are all looking forward to meeting her!

And your on-the-ball **Charleston Conference planners** have arranged for a panel on the **SkyRiver/OCLC lawsuit** and **The Google Book Settlement** on Saturday morning of the Conference, **The Long Arm of the Law** — featuring the lively **Ann Okerson** (Associate University Librarian for Collections and International Programs, **Yale University**); **Bill Hannay** (Attorney,

Schiff Hardin LLP); **Susan Kornfield** (University of Michigan). Can't wait! Take that back. Not yet! Too much to do between now and November!

Have you seen the news that the **GBS Judge, Denny Chin** has been confirmed by the United States Senate as a federal judge of the 2nd US Circuit Court of Appeals? What will this do to the timeline of the **GBS**. No one seems to be talking right now.
<http://www.asianweek.com/2010/05/31/a-tribute-to-chinese-american-hero-judge-denny-chin/>
<http://mhpbooks.com/mobylikes/?p=16199>
<http://wo.ala.org/gbs/articles-blog-posts-links/>

Talk about mind-boggling! Read **Michael Pelikan's** column in this issue. What do **Moby Dick** and **Avatar** have in common? I saw **Avatar** not at all but **Michael** saw it three times. The only three times I did was read his column three times! **Michael** keeps us on our toes

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